



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Contact: Mike Louisell (360) 902-1813

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560
Visit our Web site at: agr.wa.gov

State Department of Agriculture begins spartina treatments for 2011 season

OLYMPIA – The 2011 spartina treatment season will start June 1 and continue through October, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) announced today. Survey and eradication efforts this year will take place in Grays Harbor, Willapa Bay, Hood Canal, Puget Sound, the north and west sides of the Olympic Peninsula and the mouth of the Columbia River.

Spartina, commonly known as cordgrass, is an aggressive noxious weed that severely disrupts the ecosystems of native saltwater estuaries in Washington. Spartina overruns native vegetation and converts ecologically productive mudflats into solid spartina meadows, destroying important migratory shorebird and waterfowl habitat, increasing the threat of flooding and impacting the state's shellfish industry.

Over the past eight years, the combined statewide effort to eradicate spartina from the state's marine waters has reduced infested acres from a high of over 9,000 acres in 2003 to an estimated 12 acres this year.

"The cooperative effort to eradicate spartina is saving some of the state's most productive shoreline habitat from certain loss," says Brad White, manager for WSDA's Pest Program. "Because of our joint success, program activity has shifted from large-scale eradication to the critical, detailed work of infestation detection, target eradication and maintenance."

WSDA and other agencies will use various eradication techniques, including digging out small infestations, smothering with geo-textile cloth, or spraying cordgrass with herbicides glyphosate and imazapyr. WSDA administers the discharge permit required to treat spartina with herbicides.

Since 1995, the Washington State Department of Agriculture has served as the lead state agency for the spartina eradication. WSDA facilitates the continued cooperation of local, state, federal and tribal governments; universities; interested groups; and private landowners.

Brad White, WSDA permit coordinator, can be contacted at (360) 902-2071 for further questions about the Spartina Program or visit www.agr.wa.gov/PlantsInsects/Weeds/Spartina.

The state Department of Ecology has a 24-hour emergency number that can be used to report concerns about spartina treatments (360) 407-6283.

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